



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Representatives Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Bobbi Jo Cini, Christine Conley, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Sliker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Lori A. Watrous, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.

Wednesday, August 10, 2016

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

REGULAR MEETING

Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Cini, Rep. Conley, Rep. Evans, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Parker, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson

Members Absent: Rep. Baril, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Longino, Rep. Marley, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Nault, Rep. Wagner and Rep. Williams

Moderator Newsome stated that 28 members were present and he declared a quorum.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Cindy Landry, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, members of the School Facilities Initiative Task Force, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 13 2016

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Wilson, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The vote on approval of the minutes carried 25 in favor, 3 abstentions. Abstaining: Reps. I. Streeter, J. Streeter and Swindell.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Craig Koehler, 263 Brook Street, Groton, cited his years of experience as Co-Chairman of the School Facilities Initiative Task Force and a member to the Phase II School committee. He urged the RTM members to vote in favor of the School Facilities Initiative so it can be put through to a referendum vote in November.

Wes Greenleaf, 120 Brook Street, Groton, mentioned his 35 years experience with the Groton Public Schools Maintenance Department and that he was a member of the School Facilities Initiative Task Force. He stated that the schools were well maintained by the Board of Education but funds for many Capital Improvement Plans were deferred by the Town of Groton. He added that the schools are in dire need of renovation and replacement and asked the RTM to vote yes and send this initiative to referendum.

Jane Dauphinais, 826 Groton Long Point Road, urged RTM members to send this major initiative

to the voters for a referendum in November.

Lenny Winkler, 151 Pamela Avenue, Groton, supports the Groton 2020 Plan and read a letter from Mayor Bruce Flax who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. He noted that the quality of our schools has a direct correlation to the future of the Town as well as the economic development of the Town. He asked the RTM to please vote to send this plan to referendum and give the people of Groton the opportunity to make an informed decision.

Mike Graner, 496 Noank Road, Mystic, on behalf of the Board of Education explained that this plan has been in the works for 3 1/2 years and that all the issues the school system has are addressed in this plan. He noted that the plan has been submitted to the State Board of Education and that if it is rejected a new plan will have to come forward. He urged the RTM to send this plan to referendum.

Rosanne Kotowski, 24 Ann Avenue, Mystic, thanked the RTM members who supported the taxpayers during the recent budget deliberations. She spoke of her views on the economic reality in Groton, and she does not support the Groton 2020 Plan. She stated that if the plan is approved it would be paid for with borrowed money and taxes would be increased. She believes there is no support in the community for this project. She offered suggestions for solving the racial imbalance issue in Groton and urged the RTM members not to send this project to referendum.

Kevin Trejo, 536 Shennecossett Road, Groton, supports the project and asked the RTM to send it to referendum and let the voters decide.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. Deane-Shinbrot, Frickman, Garcia, Hubbard, Nault and Wagner notified the Town Clerk of their absence.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

1. Financial report

Town Manager Mark Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2016 is approximately \$9.1 million. He reported that the General Contingency budget for FYE 2017 was appropriated at \$425,000. Approved transfers as of July 31, 2016 for Charter Revision Committee expenses totaled \$7,000 leaving a balance of \$418,000. The Capital Reserve Fund balance as of June 30, 2016 is estimated at \$712,354. Final numbers for FYE 2016 will be available once all year end journal entries have been posted.

2. Monthly briefing

Town Manager Mark Oefinger highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He mentioned that the Library had secured funding from a local grassroots group, Power of Together, to support the Library's Sunday hours. The Power of Together is a newly formed group serving southeastern Connecticut with the tagline, Local citizens making a big difference for local charities. He announced that the Town of Groton had once again been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. He mentioned that the 3rd Annual Groton Town Police Department versus the Groton City Police Department softball game will be held on August 20th at 4:30 p.m. at Washington Park. He talked about the Update on Clientfirst Initiatives to improve software applications etcetera. The Town is currently on track to select a vendor by the end of 2016, however, no contract can be signed until funding is approved in the FYE 2018 budget. He referred to attachment 8 of the Town Manager's News which is an update thru June 2016 from the Office of Planning and Development Services. He also mentioned the Air and Sea Celebration on August 19th at the Mystic Jet Center North Hangar, 255 Tower Avenue from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. He reported that the Office of Planning and Development has contracted with GreatBlue Research to conduct telephone surveys of Groton residents and businesses. He referred to attachment 12, a flyer from the Connecticut

Submarine Century for the Groton Sub Box Derby being held on September 4th from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Washington Park. He noted that there are published copies of the adopted budget available. He added that it is a summary report.

Rep. Conley stated that several of her constituents had complained to her about the increased amount of their sewer bills.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger noted that there was a planned increase but would follow up on their complaints to insure their bills were accurate.

G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

None.

H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

None.

I. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

J. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Moderator Newsome explained the process for voting on Referral 2016-0169, Adoption of Ordinance on School Facilities Initiative. He stated that both the Finance and Education subcommittees were charged with providing a report with recommendations. He stated that he would make a motion to put item 2016-0169 to a vote. He noted that questions pertaining to the matter should commence after it is on the floor and opened for discussion.

1. FINANCE - Chairman Quinn

Chairman Quinn read the minutes of the meeting that was held on August 03, 2016. The committee met and voted on sending Referral 2016-0169 Adoption of Ordinance on School Facilities Initiative to referendum. The motion failed with two members in favor, three member opposed and two member abstaining. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Quinn, seconded by Rep. Pasqualini and so voted unanimously.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES -Chairman Conley

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent

Chairman Neugent read the minutes of the meeting that was held on August 2, 2016. The committee met and voted on sending Referral 2016-0169 Adoption of Ordinance on School Facilities Initiative to referendum. The motion passed with five members in favor, one member opposed and no abstentions. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Neugent, seconded by Rep. Massett and so voted unanimously.

Rep. Frickman added a minority report to the minutes which was read to the full RTM by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and is on file in the Town Clerk's office.

2016-0169 Adoption of Ordinance on School Facilities Initiative

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$184,500,000 FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE GROTON 2020 PLAN, CONSISTING OF A NEW, CONSOLIDATED MIDDLE SCHOOL AND CONVERSION OF THE EXISTING MIDDLE SCHOOLS INTO "RENOVATED LIKE NEW" ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO

FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GROTON:

Section 1. That the sum of ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$184,500,000) is appropriated for costs related to design and construction of (i) a new, approximately 169,000 sq. ft. consolidated middle school to be situated on the Town-owned Merritt site at 35 Groton Long Point Road, between Ella Grasso Technical High School and Robert E. Fitch High School and (ii) conversion of the existing Carl C. Cutler Middle School at 160 Fishtown Road and the existing West Side Middle School at 250 Brandege Avenue into two "renovated like new" pre-K through grade 5 elementary schools, including the addition of approximately 11,000 sq. ft. of new space at each school. The appropriation may be spent for design and construction costs, demolition costs, equipment, furnishings, materials, land or easement acquisition, necessary utilities, parking, road and sidewalk improvements off and on the school sites, site improvements, portable classrooms, storage and moving costs, architects' fees, engineering fees, construction manager fees, legal fees, net interest on borrowings and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project or its financing. The Town Council, or its designee, shall approve the final concept for the school project. The Town Council may reduce or modify the project and may delete portions of the project if funds are insufficient to complete the entire project.

Section 2. That the Town issue bonds or notes in an amount not to exceed ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$184,500,000) to finance the appropriation for the project. The amount of bonds or notes authorized to be issued shall be reduced by the amount of grants received by the Town for the project. The bonds or notes shall be issued pursuant to Sections 7-369 and 10-289 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended, and any other enabling acts. The bonds or notes shall be secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town of Groton. The Town does hereby covenant and agree with the holders of the bonds or notes and all notes issued in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of such bonds or notes that in each year while any such bonds or notes are outstanding, it will levy and collect ad valorem taxes upon all taxable properties within the Town in an amount sufficient, with such other funds of the Town as shall be available for such purpose, to pay the interest and principal on the bonds or notes as the same become due and payable.

Section 3. That the Town issue and renew temporary notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the project. The amount of temporary notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$184,500,000). The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended. The notes shall be secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the Town, payable as provided in Section 2. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Sections 7-378a and 7-378b of the General Statutes with respect to any notes that do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.

Section 4. The Town Manager and the Director of Finance shall determine the amount of any temporary notes authorized by Section 3 to be sold. The Town Manager and the Director of Finance of the Town shall sign any bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures. The law firm of Day Pitney LLP is designated as bond counsel to approve the legality of the bonds or notes. The Town Manager and the Director of Finance are authorized to determine the dates, interest rates, maturities, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds or notes; to provide for the keeping of a record of the bonds or notes; to designate one or more banks or trust companies to be certifying bank, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for the bonds or notes; to designate a financial advisor to the Town in connection with the sale of the bonds or notes; to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes.

Section 5. That the Town hereby declares its official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant moneys) the Town reasonably expects to

reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the project. The Town Manager and the Director of Finance are authorized to amend such declaration of official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

Section 6. That the Town Manager and the Director of Finance are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.

Section 7. That the Board of Education is authorized to apply for and accept state grants for the project. The Board of Education is authorized to file applications with the State Board of Education, to execute grant agreements for the project, and to file such documents as may be required by the State Board of Education to obtain grants for the costs of financing the project.

Section 8. That the Town Manager, the Director of Finance and other proper officers of the Town are authorized to take all other action which is necessary or desirable to complete the project and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

Section 9. This ordinance shall become effective only if it has been adopted by vote of not less than five (5) members of the Town Council and by the Representative Town Meeting, and only if the appropriation set forth in Section 1 and the issuance of bonds and notes to finance said appropriation have been approved by the voters at referendum in accordance with Sections 5.5.5.1 and 9.13 the Town Charter, and notice of passage has been published in accordance with the provisions of the Town Charter.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Massett, that this matter be Adopted.

Moderator Newsome made a motion for the adoption of ordinance appropriating \$184,500,000 for the design and construction of the Groton 2020 Plan, consisting of a new consolidated middle school and conversion of the existing middle schools into renovated like new elementary schools and authorizing the issue of bonds and notes in the same amount to finance said appropriation. The motion was seconded by Rep. Massett.

Rep. J. Streeter stated that all the pros and cons of this project need to be looked at, and he is in favor of sending this project to referendum. He added that we all have a period of time to make an intelligent decision.

Rep. Conley thanked the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael Graner and Town Manager Mark Oefinger for all the information they had provided to the RTM on this project. She asked what the referendum would cost the Town.

In response to Rep. Conley, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that estimated costs for printing and distribution of explanatory text are approximately \$2,290.00. Legal ads which would run 3 times are between \$1,400.00 and \$1,700.00 each. The municipal election is estimated at \$22,590.00 and the presidential election at \$29,194.00.

Rep. Conley stated that there would be a substantial tax increase if this project is approved. She added that she is in favor of sending the Groton 2020 Plan to referendum to give her constituents more time to discuss and ask more questions about the plan.

Rep. Obrey supports the referendum and requested that the voters be made aware about the location of the school.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger noted that they are still in conversation with the State about the preferred site which is the Merritt property. He noted that if the Town does not gain access to the Merritt property that there will probably not be a project. He added that other pre-conditions include approval of a waiver request and 80% reimbursement for one of the schools.

Rep. McDermott stated as Republican Floor Leader, the most democratic thing we can do for a project of this magnitude is to send it to referendum.

Rep. Swindell supports the plan for educational equality and economic development. He advised his constituents to fully explore this plan and urged the RTM to send this plan to referendum in November.

Rep. Pasqualini asked if there could be a survey question on the ballot. He noted that if the plan is rejected in the referendum, a new plan will have to come forward. He feels a ballot reflecting the reason for not voting in favor of the plan or the cost would be helpful.

Rep. Bauer stated that as RTM members we should investigate and report to their constituents everything we can about this plan. She added that this plan should go to referendum to allow the voters to make their decision.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 24 - Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Baker, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Casper, Rep. Conley, Rep. Evans, Rep. Sliker-Hersant, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Maher, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Watrous, Rep. Welles and Rep. Wilson
Opposed: 4 - Rep. Bailey, Rep. Cini, Rep. Parker and Rep. Pasqualini Jr.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Wilson

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Deane-Shinbrot

No meeting, no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett

No meeting, no report.

K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

None.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Rep. Wilson stated that his yes vote as an RTM member to send the Groton 2020 Plan to referendum will not necessarily be his vote in November to adopt the plan. He asked who is responsible for the verbage on the referendum ballot.

Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that the Town Attorney would be responsible for any verbage on the referendum ballot.

Rep. Swindell stated that if the ordinance on the School Facilities Initiative is not adopted by the voters, a random survey should be completed to find out the reason why it failed.

Rep. Obrey reiterated attachmenet 10 of the Town Manager's News and stated that the Air and Sea Celebration on August 19th at the Mystic Jet Center. It will be a wonderful time and invited all to attend.

M. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously. Moderator Newsome adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II